



## EUROPE IN ARMY BOOTS AND BREECHES?

Nothing out of the ordinary has just happened. Just another oblast administration head has been fired; just another man wearing general's epaulettes has been appointed for the post... Firstly, long live the king; secondly, we have about two dozen such administrations - one could not keep an eye on all of them, could one; thirdly, so what? However, upon closer examination of this matter, a number of questions about the general tendencies in the cadre policy of this country arise and these questions are mostly sad and disturbing.

First. It is not a standard functionary that was fired, and it was not because of the staff cutbacks that he was fired. The Volyn oblast governor was fired (the population of the Volyn oblast is more than a million, a size comparable with that of Estonia). He had worked at this post for a whole seven years, which is almost a record period in this country - only its president has been in power longer. So, before the governor has pleased the President for those seven years. And then, all of a sudden... Maybe the governor failed to curb unemployment? Maybe the governor failed to ensure the country-average GDP per oblast capita? Maybe the governor failed to promote the general welfare of the above capita? Maybe. But the order on his dismissal says nothing about this. The comments by the employees of the Presidential Administrations are not wordy either: former governor was appointed President's adviser. What does this mean: he did not cope with his job and now he will advise. Or, on the contrary, he successfully coped with his job and now will advise to the first person in the country so that the latter will cope with his?

The unanswered questions give rise to more questions. If nobody says why he was fired, then why was he fired at this exact moment? What happened at this moment? One of the most likely answers is the parliamentary elections. Let us visit the website of the Central Election Commission and see who won the elections in the Volyn oblast? The Viktor Yushchenko bloc (57.6 percent), the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc (13.3 percent), the For a United Ukraine bloc (8.0 percent) and the Communist Party (5.3 percent) according to the party lists - the ratio is 9 to 1 in favor of the opposition. And what about the majority representation? Of the five Volyn deputies, one has registered with the United Ukraine faction, three with the Our Ukraine faction, and one remained out of any factions. Is it possible that this was a fatal statistic for the governor? It looks this way. Let us remember that when Volyn reported beyond-belief percentage (86.1 percent) of participants in the 2000 referendum and complete public support of all four questions put for discussion (90.4 percent, 92.1 percent, 92.9 percent and 86.5 percent correspondently), the governor was sitting pretty! But when the wrong people won the 2002 election, there came an order: out...

The Volyn governor is not the first one who was fired after the 31 March election, as a matter of fact. The first one was the Ternopol governor, who was dismissed in April "due to his taking on another job." There was a clear victory of Viktor Yushchenko's and Yuliya Tymoshenko's blocs in Ternopol oblast and all five deputies elected according to majority representation joined the Our Ukraine faction...

Second. The appointment of the new governor, who is the militia general Anatoliy Frantsuz, gives rise to even more questions than the dismissal of his predecessor. No doubt, the general is a worthy person, a hero of Ukraine, who showed his worth in the story of the German bank robbery by the German criminals. But who needs to make a general-governor of him and why? Is there a war raging in Volyn? Is its life support infrastructure completely destroyed? Do terrorists never leave local population and authorities there in peace? And only a tough militia commandant-general is capable of breaking down the resistance and reestablishing control? That was the usual practice during the World War II operations, but the war ended more than half a century ago and life goes on.

Dear government, look around. How many police generals currently head local municipalities, say in the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Lithuania or in Germany? Not to mention the fact that these heads are not appointed but elected there. Anyway, for some reason I think that we will not find generals in such posts anywhere else in Europe in general. In that very Europe, in which we would like to integrate without understanding that we will spend much more time marching there in army boots and breeches. (In Putin's Russia generals do govern in the regions, but at least they are elected there).

It has been a long time already, as the UN does not entrust its generals even to head peacekeeping missions, even if there is no recognized government and there is complete devastation in the conflict zone. Only the appointed UN civilian heads fulfill this task. As for the generals, both army and police generals, they command their divisions and stay subordinated.

Why do we appoint an acting general for an absolutely civilian position as an oblast governor? Generals, who were drafted and trained to perform police duties. Formally, there is no violation of the law and it is possible to appoint generals to every post. However, they just do not fill the role: no matter how long we try to make our state democratic and jural, it resembles a police state more and more...

If crime increased in the Volyn oblast, we should reinforce the oblast department of the Internal Ministry with experienced personnel. But again, the President's order states absolutely no reasons for the appointment of general Frantsuz. It is not customary in here to give superfluous written comments. The President rarely gives oral comments on his cadre decisions either, he just makes them.

Moreover, our officials are noted as having a very strange preference for military ranks (even if these are the ranks of army reserve) and for uniforms that are nicer, and for uniform caps that have higher crowns. Even if an official is not of the army reserve, he will be dressed in a uniform all the same - one could hardly tell a tax inspector or a forest-guard from a colonel in the darkness. It seems that in a little while a quite forgotten army-type jacket will come back into the fashion of the officials. One can feel something Stalinist and Korean in this rage for uniforms. It could be OK, since everyone dresses as they want, but... As a rule harmless army jackets and uniforms are an unmistakable sign of, to put it mildly, not so democratic and not so civil states.

Third. General Frantsuz is not the first militia general to hold the pose of governor. The President appointed militia general Hennadiy Moskal governor of the Trans Carpathian Oblast last June and militia general Yuriy Kravchenko (recently dismissed) the head of the Kherson oblast last December. The media, however, did not report any military operations in these regions and the President did not announce a state of emergency there. Nevertheless, these appointments were made.

We have already stopped reacting to a lot of things happening in this country and we do not seriously think about the above practice. While, such a practice is very faulty and even dangerous per se. We substitute a civilian politician with an acting general for the post of an oblast head. For decades, generals have been taught to obey orders without questioning them and without thinking about their content and legitimacy. They are accustomed to giving orders without trying to reach an agreement or to persuade. They are accustomed to imposing their own will on others, to risking their lives and health and to demanding that others do the same. It is extremely difficult for a general to work in a political environment fraught with conflicts, where conflicting interests of parties and public organizations come to the surface, and cooperate with amorphous, frequently inefficient elective bodies.

In a hardly controllable situation, which is actually normal at the current stage of political competition, a general would lose his temper and assume a commanding tone, which is absolutely inadmissible, much sooner than civilian politician. It is extremely dangerous if there is nobody to put such a general in his place.

Unfortunately, we have already lost any sensitivity to such actions, for which generals (and not only them) are dismissed right off the bat in normal countries. Not only in well established democracies but also in many post-soviet states (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia), if a minister general made a statement saying that journalists are subject to violence and premature death chiefly due to their addiction to alcohol, his words would cause such a storm of public uproar that he would immediately hand in his resignation without waiting for the president to give a corresponding order, since he would stand no chance of going on with his law enforcement activity. In Ukraine, such things happen without any consequences, even without public censure by the head of the state (who appointed this general for his post) and the head of the Cabinet (which this general is a member of).

This general again lost his temper and publicly expressed his discontent with a particular court decision and the unmanageable and uncontrollable court system in general. For such a move, he would be fired immediately and without any discussion, but not in this country. Only those who do not decide on his resignation squawk. The President and the Prime Minister keep significantly silent. Top officials of this country should assume personal responsibility for their generals, whom they charge with the tasks unnatural to them.

Fourth. Cadre policy has long ceased to be understandable, or to be more exact it has never been understandable for the citizens of this country. The brevity of appointment orders reveals the profound wit of their writers. Let us take an official publication and read the order. The text of the order is word-for-word that of its title and shorter than the signature under it. To dismiss such and such from the post of such, date, signature, number. That is it. To appoint such and such for the post of such... Why to dismiss? Why to appoint? What did the first do wrong? What are the merits of the second? Nothing is clear.

All leading TV channels of Ukraine broadcasted the information on the appointment of General Frantsuz governor. However, none of the journalists, not only in the news reports, but also in longer and more serious analytical programs, raised the issue of why the former governor was dismissed. Why did they not do it? Did not think about it? Overlooked? Thought it would not be interesting? Thought, nothing would change, no matter how much one would talk? If this is the case, everything will soon become all the same for us - the trust in this government, in its representatives, in their proteges, and our own fate.

Another interesting episode to this is when the new Industrial Policy Minister Anatoliy Myalitsa was appointed, the Cabinet of Ministers official publication published his tiny biography with the following comment: "After the decree of the President of Ukraine about the appointment ... was published, our readers started calling the editor asking to give a background of the new minister, since up until recently he, they say, was not known to the general public." Why "they say"? This worthy person indeed was not among the public politicians and nothing is said about him in the "Who Is Who in Ukraine" reference book. His published biography clarifies very little, however, but rather intrigues: general director of Kharkiv aviation enterprise A. Myalitsa was awarded a medal "For courage during the guarding of the state frontier of Ukraine". The image, which comes to mind during the reading of these lines, has little to do with the industrial policy minister... Generally, it might be a good idea to let the citizens know the background of ministers "before" and without readers' requests.

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Cadre policy... the state should be transparent and clear to its citizens. This is an axiom, in theory. Things are much more complicated in practice. We do not know and perhaps will never know the true reason for the dismissal of just another governor. However, we do know what indices should be considered to judge the results of his work. These are: the number of workplaces newly created in the oblast, the volume of the investment attracted to the oblast economy, statistics (over the time of his term of office) on the oblast's life expectancy, birth rate, migration of the oblast population and other of this kind. At present however, the assessment of the governor's efficiency is based on his loyalty, ability to ensure needed results in the election, tactical political expediency and other factors, which may be important but which have very little significance for society.

How much longer do we have to wait for better times, when army generals will command only the army, militia generals fight crime and when there will be no politically unaffiliated people in the government and when a specific party will be responsible for minister's failures, the party which recommended him for this post? We do not have a specific answer for this question; we offer an optimistic scenario instead.

A short animated cartoon film won a prize at a film festival. Its plot is very simple: there is a full house in a huge theater. The curtain goes up and soldiers slowly come on stage. They slowly mount machine-guns. The audience is silently watching what is happening on stage. The soldiers slowly bring in the ammunition. The audience is watching silently. The soldiers are slowly mounting the sight. The audience is silent... "Fire!" the order comes and the soldiers start shooting the audience. The end. The key words here are "slowly" and "silently"; the soldiers, guns and shooting is only an entourage, the pungent form of which makes the audience realize the price of their indifference to their own fate. The cartoon soldiers could be substituted with unarmed civilians. It is a different problem: the answers to the questions raised in this article depend on ratio between the depth of the spoor of "the silent" and the degree of the impudence and greed of "the slowly". At present it is not a favorable correlation, but one would like to think that it will not last forever...

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